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## Greening the bottom line Students focus on corporate sustainability

Feb 14, 2008

By Laura Green

College of Business student Sam Crites got more than he bargained for when he enrolled in the Professional Communications course this winter. The theme for the class is corporate sustainability, a concept that most students in the class were unfamiliar with at the start of the quarter.

"I knew what it was, I just didn't understand the degree of importance and how big it is on a global scale," Crites said. "I think what I have learned most from the class is how much we actually waste and how easily that can be changed."

Professor of Management Mary Tucker chose the topic as the course theme for the first time after meeting Nicole Gullekson, a doctoral candidate in psychology who focuses on the "greening" of corporations. Gullekson proposed the idea of incorporating sustainability into the business curriculum at Ohio University after participating in a weeklong sustainability workshop in Germany.

"When we talk about a 'triple bottom line' in corporate sustainability, it is about making profits, and it's also about doing socially responsible things for the community, for the environment, for everything else," Gullekson said.

Gullekson and Tucker drew on the resources available through the Office of Sustainability to refashion the course and develop a central team project assignment.

"We came up with a list of businesses, small and large, local and national, that the students would be investigating in order to profile them from a corporate sustainability perspective," Sustainability Coordinator Sonia Marcus said. The student teams selected eight companies to profile, including Village Bakery & Cafe in Athens; Great Lakes Brewing Co., based in Cleveland; and Apple Computer.

"This is actually one of two courses in the College of Business that have chosen to integrate sustainability into the curriculum this quarter," Marcus said, "and I imagine that trend will continue." The other is one of Associate Professor Jane Sojka's courses, and it focuses on the marketing of compact fluorescent light bulbs.

Tucker argues that sustainability is a concept business students

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will need to master in order to remain competitive in the marketplace in the years ahead.

"You can open up the newspaper and you are seeing sustainability. Any newspaper, any magazine that is business driven has topics about sustainability now," she said. "So it's not something that is going to go away."

Next Monday and Wednesday, Tucker's students will present their findings to Marcus and local business people familiar with corporate sustainability issues.

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*To speak with a media consultant regarding this story or make arrangements to attend the students' presentations, contact Alison Wayner at 740-593-9990 or [green3@ohio.edu](mailto:green3@ohio.edu) for more information.*

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